# In-laws are poor company

**Annie's Mailbox**
Creators Syndicate Inc.
*Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar*

**Dear Annie:** My mother-in-law lives an hour away from us. My husband's sister, "Dot," and her husband, "Jeff," and their married children, periodically come to our house for overnight stays in order to visit Mom. My husband often invites Dot and her family to come for several days at Christmas. We now are lucky enough to have a vacation cabin, and he invited them to stay with us for two weeks.

When they visit, Dot and Jeff do not help with meals or do dishes. Jeff drinks lots of coffee, but never offers to make a pot. Dot means well, but is such a talker that she easily gets sidetracked on her way to help at cleanup time. They do not take us out for a single meal or offer to order pizza. They both speak loudly. Jeff mostly talks about himself and Dot can carry on for hours.

My family gathers at a hotel for the holidays, and we invite my siblings to the cabin for two nights each summer. While my husband welcomes my siblings, I do not enjoy hosting his side. I want to show respect for my in-laws and make my husband happy, but it's really unpleasant to be around them. I cannot handle two weeks.

I told my husband that we should discuss these invitations before they are extended. His retort is that I would never agree to host his sister. Do you have any suggestions? — *Can't Do It*

**Dear Can't:** All such invitations should be discussed in advance, but then you cannot dismiss all requests to host Dot and Jeff. The compromise is the length of the visit. You would find it more tolerable to host your in-laws if they stayed for a shorter duration — say, three days or less. Two weeks is too much, especially for guests who refuse to help out. Also, set some guidelines. It is perfectly OK to tell Jeff, "As long as you are having coffee, please make a pot for the rest of us." It's also fine to say to either one, "I could use some help in the kitchen," and "Tonight, it's your turn to treat us to dinner — you get to pick the place." Assert yourself, and make sure your husband is on board. And when the conversation becomes too much, go for a walk. Alone.

**Dear Annie:** As a senior citizen, I would like to suggest that stores, including grocery stores, provide some benches throughout their shopping areas. I could shop longer after taking a break. The benches in front, outside the checkout area, are inconvenient.

Also, the scooters offered at some stores often have not been fully charged. They are left in parking lots, and employees need to bring them in to recharge. Customers should plug them in. It only takes a moment. — *Trying to Be Independent*

**Dear Trying:** You make a good point that benches at varying points throughout a store could encourage shoppers to spend more money, and owners might consider that an incentive. As for plugging in scooters, that relies on the consideration of each individual user. The same applies to those who use regular shopping carts and leave them all over the parking lot.

# Tomorrow's horoscope

**By Holiday Mathis, Creators Syndicate Inc.**

**ARIES (March 21-April 19).** Your current inner circle is so demanding that you're hesitant to make efforts to establish new friendships. However, the benefits to widening that circle will be numerous and definite.

**TAURUS (April 20-May 20).** Retrospect makes the good times seem better and the bad times seem worse. However you're thinking about it now, don't act on those sentimental feelings you're having.

**GEMINI (May 21-June 21).** You think you're not ready, but it's time, so just do it. Maybe it's something to do with your gravity-defying air-sign-ness, but quite often, when you fail, you fail upward. That will happen again today.

**CANCER (June 22-July 22).** Yes, what happens to you is far less important than what you take from the experience. Then again, the takeaway has a tendency to get delayed like mismarked mail. In the meantime, talk about what happened.

**LEO (July 23-Aug. 22).** While the benefits to working with a crack team are enormous, the best way to earn a place in such a group is by putting in the kind of solitary practice and study time that you'll put in today.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).** Too much generosity and agreeableness can actually work against a relationship. It is possible to take too much responsibility or give way more than the other person, thus stunting the relationship. Lopsided wheels don't roll.

**LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23).** The need for balance and justice will once again compel you to make gestures of diplomacy. This will include defusing a tense situation and/or helping a group find their common goals.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21).** Learning to be a leader who can inspire and motivate others is among the most valuable skills you can pick up these days. That way, when you rebel against your own authority, you'll know how to handle it.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21).** Recent changes that your loved one has made will really take some getting used to. Then again, others have had to get used to all the changes you've made along the way, too. This is just a matter of taking turns.

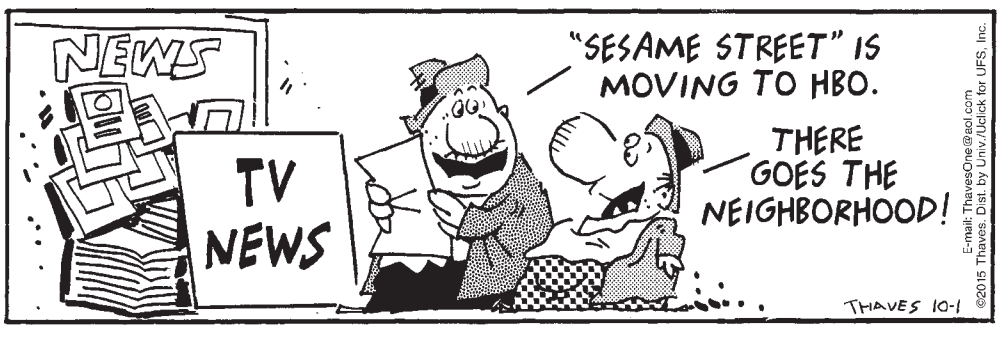
**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19).** Some have a loneliness about them that never seems to abate. Even through smiles, conversation and laughter, loneliness remains the ghosted image over their being.

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18).** The critics are out today, and they'll join the trolls under the bridge to add just enough validity to comments to make for a barbed landing. But if you never take it personally, you'll never get hurt.

**PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20).** You might notice that you've come full circle, and though it comes with a twinge of mixed emotion, you can take heart that it's not the end of the journey. That's the thing about circles.

**FRIDAY'S BIRTHDAY (Oct. 2).** You're becoming like the person you admired way back. Starting in January, the road to success might jiggle your bones and rattle your teeth, but that won't stop you from arriving in March, road-weary and yet victorious, at success's gate. Push through and accept the destiny that has always been yours. Virgo and Scorpio people adore you. Your lucky numbers are: 7, 14, 38, 21 and 9.

FRANK AND ERNEST

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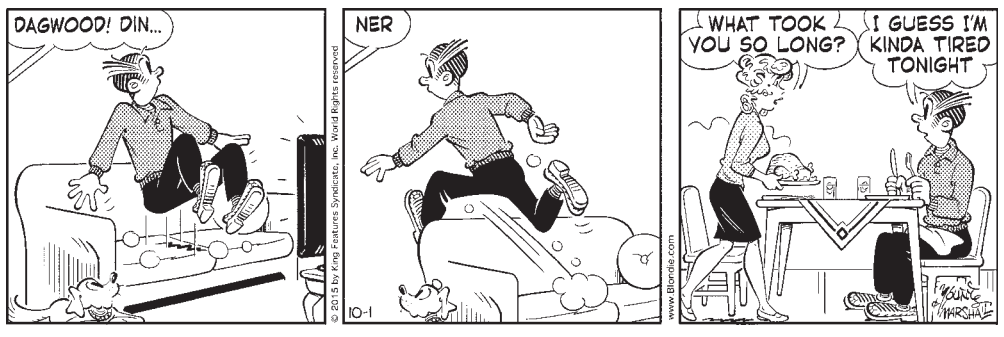


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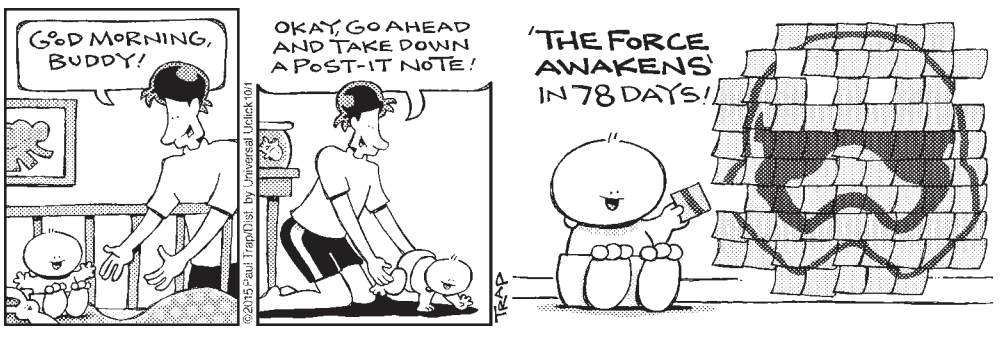


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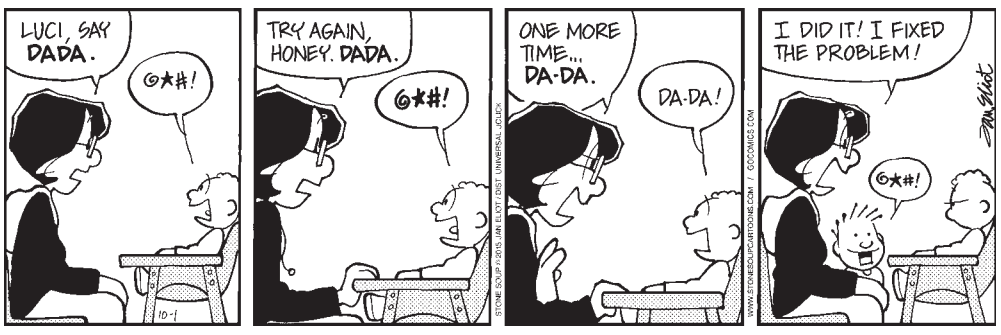


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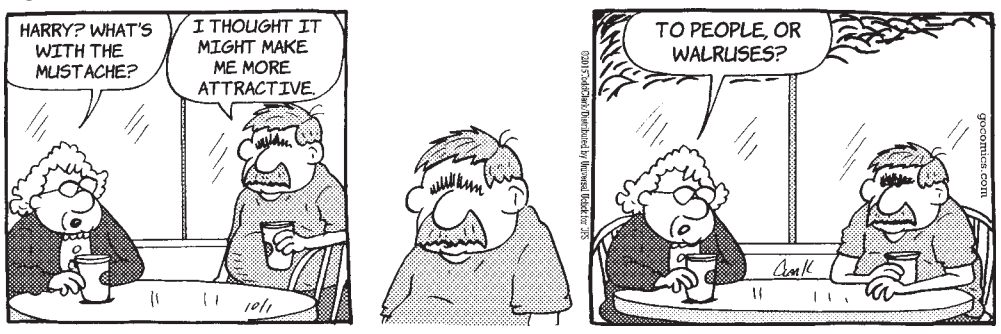


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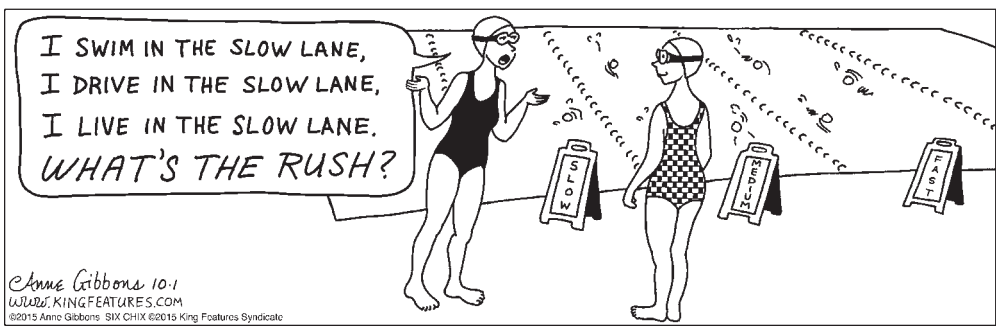


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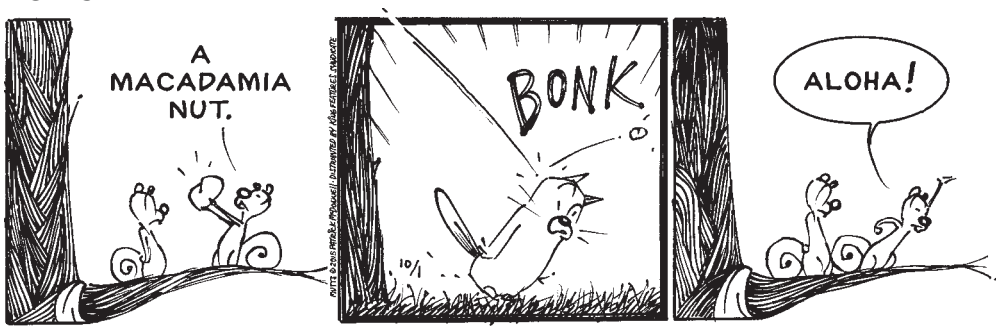


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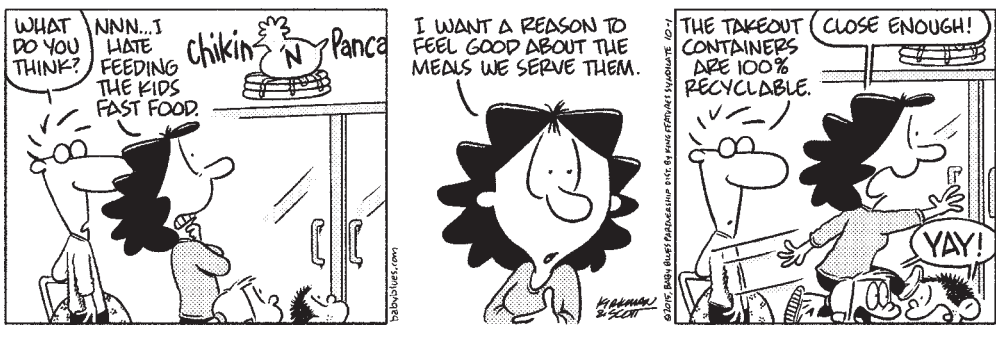


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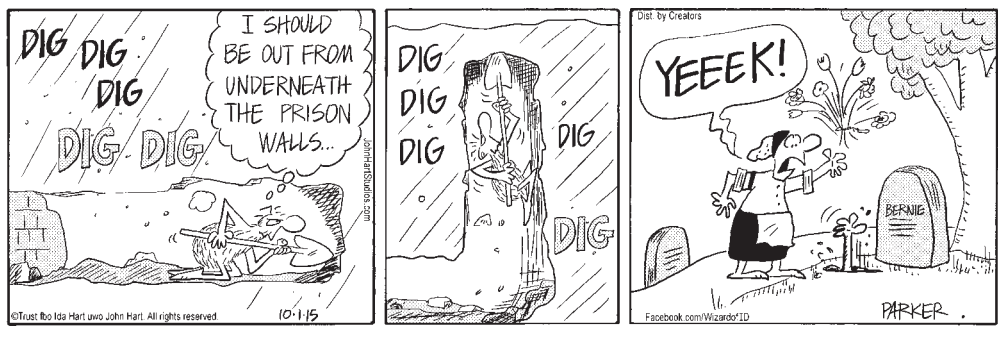


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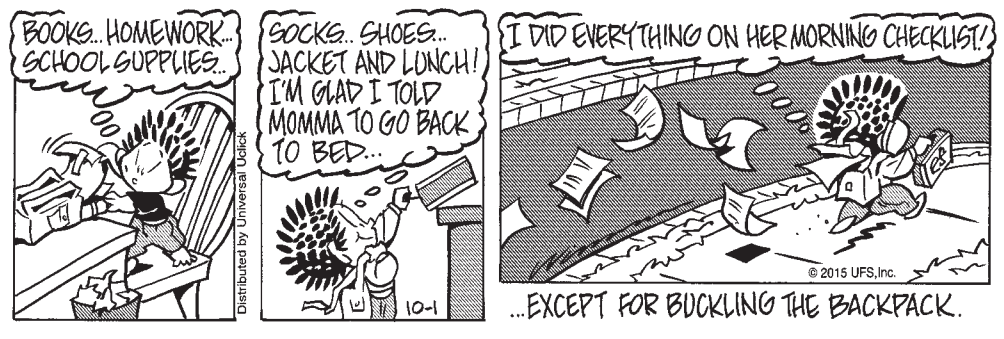
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